

Testimony

February 28, 2006

House of Representatives

*Against allowing collective bargaining related language in rules and regulations that affect Homes for the Aged or Adult Foster Care*

Susan M. Huber RN

Administrator

SJMHS/Huron Woods

Ann Arbor, MI

734 712-4295

I am a geriatric nurse and the Administrator of St. Joseph Mercy Health System Huron Woods, an HFA in Ann Arbor that specializes in dementia care. We are known for our cutting edge work that is based on research and outcome performance. We have on-going research projects on site that are facilitated by well-respected educators, nurses, physicians and spiritual guides in the area of memory loss. We are committed to this field of work, not for the money but for the benefits that come from this effort. Almost every caregiver at Huron Woods will tell you that money is not the major motivating factor in their work... it is the commitment to a field of work that they believe to be of value and meaning.

Prior to working at Huron Woods, I set up 14 clinics for low-income seniors in the city of Detroit and in suburbs from Port Huron to Monroe. Over and over again I worked with direct health workers that were passionate about their work. While the work is difficult and stressful it also brings a deeper sense of meaning to many of their lives. The issues of low income, poor working conditions in some areas and long hours are real but regulating will only serve to shift the problems, not resolve them. Increase costs for families will exceed affordable care and when we begin to make compensation the major motivating factor...we all loose. Research and cutting edge programs such as those at Huron Woods will be cut and new advanced care methods will suffer. While there are issues to be addressed, regulation and unionization is not the answer... it is only another problem added.